

**TESTIMONY OF JANET SNYDER MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT  
OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS  
OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
CONCERNING S. 435, TO AMEND THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT TO  
DESIGNATE A SEGMENT OF THE FARMINGTON RIVER AND SALMON  
BROOK FOR STUDY FOR POTENTIAL ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL  
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM.**

**September 22, 2005**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 435, a bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Department supports enactment of this legislation with one technical amendment.

While the Department supports the authorization of this study, it is important that future funding requests go towards completing previously authorized studies. There are currently 25 studies in progress, and we hope to complete and transmit 6 to Congress by the end of 2005. Therefore, the Department will focus the funding provided towards completing these studies.

S. 435 presents the opportunity to build from the success of the Upper Farmington River, which was designated a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in 1994. At that time, the partnership-based model of Wild and Scenic River designations, with a limited federal role and no federal land acquisition authority, was essentially an experiment. Now, 11 years later, it is a testament to the success of that partnership

approach that the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook communities, the State of Connecticut, and the Farmington River Watershed Association have all come together to seek a similar study.

The portion of the Farmington River under consideration runs approximately 40 miles from the Upper Farmington's downstream endpoint to the Connecticut River. The Lower Farmington has its own distinct character that compliments the "outstandingly remarkable" fish, wildlife, historic and recreational resources that qualified the upper river for designation. A notable historic feature, the Farmington Canal, served as an important regional transportation link from its opening in 1825 until the mid-1840's when railroad tracks were laid upon its obsolete towpath. Today, much of this feature is being converted into a recreational multi-use path and greenway, providing outstanding access to recreational, scenic and historic attributes of the river valley.

In July 2005, results of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey of the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook uncovered what is believed to be the State of Connecticut's largest populations of the federally endangered dwarf wedgemussel (*Alasmodonta heterodon*). Salmon Brook is a major tributary of the Farmington River, and is well known for its outstanding scenery and trout fishing.

It is significant that the communities and interest groups associated with the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook have had the unique opportunity to observe and interact with the National Park Service and the Farmington River Coordinating Committee

(created to oversee management of the Upper Farmington Wild and Scenic segment) for more than ten years. The development of these relationships should facilitate the completion of the study required by this legislation.

The Department suggests one amendment to S. 435. Section 2 of the bill requires that a report on results of the study be submitted to the Senate and House authorizing committees no later than three years after the date of enactment of the Act. We believe it more feasible to provide that this occur no later than three years after funds are made available based on the number of studies currently being conducted by the Department.

This concludes my prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members may have regarding this bill.

Proposed amendment to S. 435, Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook in the State of Connecticut for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

On p. 2, line 17, strike “the date of enactment of this Act” and insert “funds are made available to carry out this Act”.